

70-164 *Gould*
MR. PENNELL'S ETCHINGS
OF LONDON 113

BY
WALTER CONRAD ARENSBERG *P38 ar 3*

REPRINTED, BY PERMISSION, FROM
"THE EVENING POST," MARCH 1, 1906



TO WHICH IS APPENDED
MR. PENNELL AS A PRINTER

BY
FREDERICK KEPPEL

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF AN EXHIBITION OF
MR. PENNELL'S NEW ETCHINGS OF LONDON



FREDERICK KEPPEL & CO.
4 EAST 39TH STREET, NEW YORK
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THE DE VINNE PRESS

Mr. Pennell's Etchings of London.

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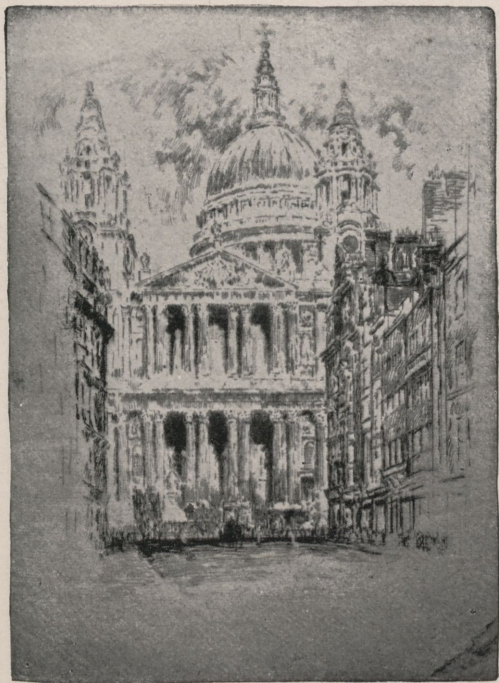
WALTER CONRAD ARENSBERG.

SIXTY-SEVEN new etchings of London by Joseph Pennell compose the major portion of the exhibition of that artist's work at the Keppel Galleries, No. 4 East Thirty-ninth Street. The other etchings on view are his already famous set of New York "Sky Scrapers." The two sets are a series of little masterpieces. They are enough by themselves to establish Pennell's position as the first of contemporary etchers of architecture. With his pen and ink work they show him unequalled as a maker of "portraits of places." No other living artist has so travelled the world over and recorded the individual character of cities and countries with a charm so personal and interpretative.

Many of the new London etchings make an interesting invasion into Whistler's territory. There are the bits of old Chelsea, the little shops, and the views along the Thames, the water front,

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the bridges, the boats, in daytime and at night. But Pennell's manner is distinctive. Originally his work was characterized by a certain sharpness and definiteness of line. Now, however, for the sake of atmospheric suggestion, the lines are broken and wavering, and the touch has a kind of accidental happiness that never seems premeditated and yet is always completely expressive. A similar change may be observed in Whistler's etchings, but while the Whistler etchings gradually became elliptical, and suggested shapes and tone by the fewest lines possible, the Pennell etchings have remained comparatively elaborate. Surfaces that Whistler would have left untouched by a line, as in the skies and water of his nocturnes, are here not only etched, but covered with "foul" biting. Tone is obtained by etched black surfaces, on which are added the shadows in dry point, and instead of the vague line with which Whistler suggested the lighter values, Pennell uses vague surfaces in the manner of aquatint. One may see all this variety of method in the beautiful "Hampton Court Palace." And as an example of the care with which the plates have been wiped for the sake of details, one may note in the "Entrance to King Henry VII's Chapel—Westminster Abbey" how the



Saint Paul's



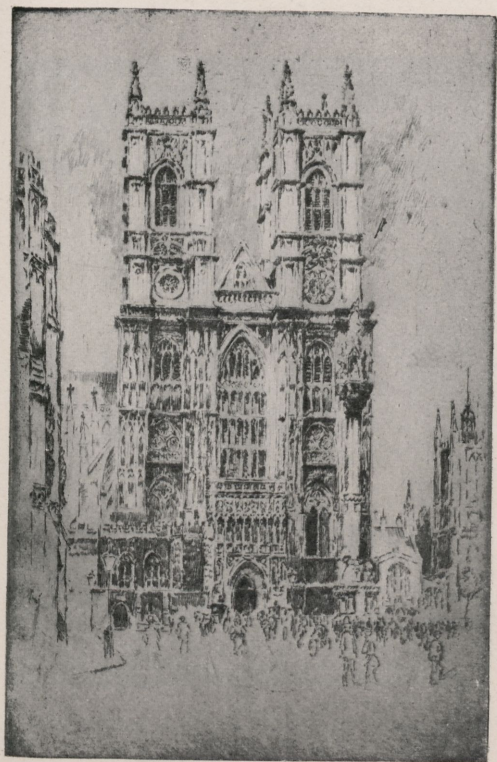
The Admiralty

lights on the architectural modelling have been touched in.

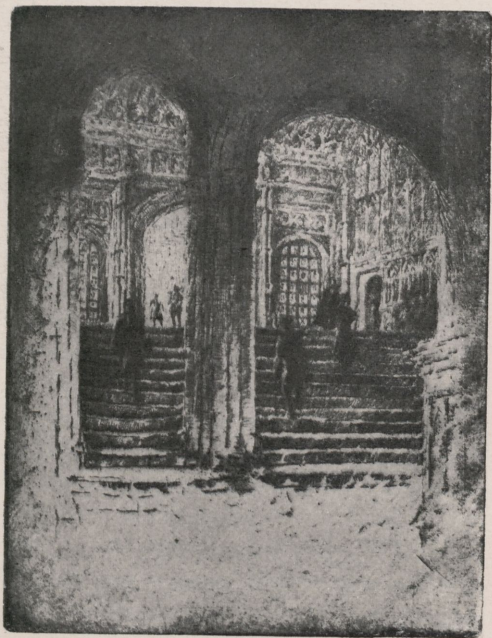
All this elaboration is in the interest of the total effect, and the total effect is always magnificently atmospheric. The drawing of the buildings has the beauty and strength of structure, and at the same time it is suffused by the air and the light and the dark. No one has so splendidly rendered the different effects of sunlight on stone, the tired dull glare of the late afternoon, the brilliant hard white, the ivory softness, and the glorifying vagueness of the play of light and shade on the fluting of columns and the carving of the capitals. And these etchings excel in suggesting the quality of surfaces, skies, water, foliage, the stone of the museums and churches, the brick of the Chelsea house fronts. In composition they have always a distinction and a surprise that comes from the happy point of view. It is a composition that gives to its glimpse of the scene a new unity in unexpected relations; and the fact that the scenes are always reversed, through the artist's habit of putting the thing as he sees it directly on the plate, takes nothing from their beauty. Among the most beautiful are "Classic London—St. Martin's-in-the-Fields," "St. Paul's," "Lindsay Row," "Westmin-

ster Abbey—West Front,” “The Tower Bridge,” “The British Museum,” and “Hampton Court Palace.” The “classic” part of London is Pennell’s own. And so, indeed, are the palaces and the abbey. He has had no predecessor there as he had on the Thames. And nothing could be more appropriate to these subjects than the infinite delicacy and restraint of their elaboration.

—Reprinted, by permission, from
The Evening Post, March 1, 1906.



Westminster Abbey—West Front



The Entrance to Henry VII Chapel—Westminster Abbey

Mr. Pennell as a Printer

BY

FREDERICK KEPPEL.

ALTHOUGH an exhibition of etchings or of drawings by Mr. Pennell is no novelty to our clients, almost all of the etchings which we now exhibit are new, — the earlier ones being no longer procurable.

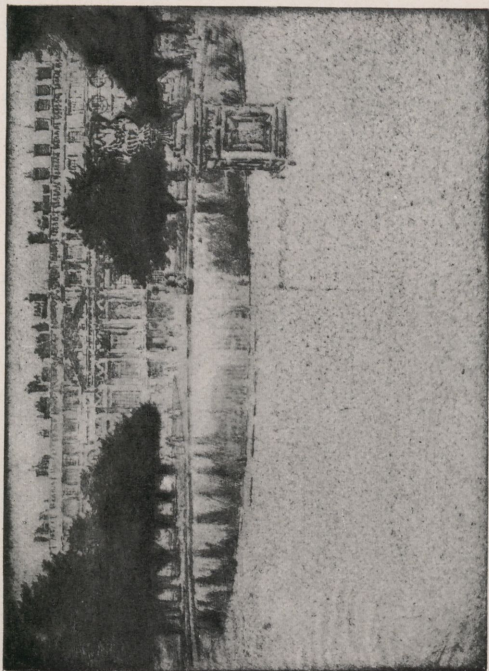
We have had several exhibitions of Mr. Pennell's works — because we “believe in” them, and because we are sure that etchings of such fine quality should be recommended as being, perhaps, the very best works of the kind which are available to art-lovers at a price which has not yet become excessive.

As in the case of the etchings of Meryon, Whistler and Seymour Haden, these moderate prices are almost sure to become much higher as soon as the supply of proofs of any plate is exhausted.

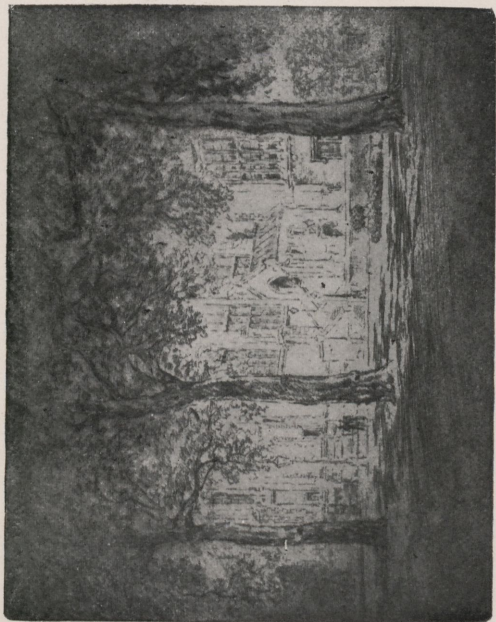
The specialty of the present exhibition is that it presents Mr. Pennell as the *printer* as well as the etcher of his own plates. No printer can

print a good proof from a bad plate, but, *per contra*, a maladroit printer would surely spoil the effect of the finest etched plate in the world. Admitting this, it is certain that no man can know so well what the printed proof should be as does the artist himself. Every line of his picture was drawn with an artistic purpose — a purpose of which only he himself has the secret ; so that when we see a proof which has been printed by the hands of the original creative artist, whether we personally like it or not, we at least know that it is exactly what its maker had intended it to be.

Nine-tenths of all the famous engravings and etchings in existence have not been printed by the artist who made the plate, but by some professional printer. Such an intermediary must have great skill, but no matter how skillful he may be he can never enter into the exact purpose and intent of the artist who conceived and etched the original plate. The skilled mechanic can print ten or twenty proofs exactly alike in quality, a thing which the original artist cannot do. Every proof which the artist prints is, in a way, a new problem to him, and hence it is that such wide differences of effect and of quality are found in different proofs of the same plate



Hampton Court Palace



Lincoln Inn Fields



The Tower Bridge

when they are printed by the artist himself. For this reason we see the importance to the intelligent collector of selecting just the proof which entirely satisfies him.

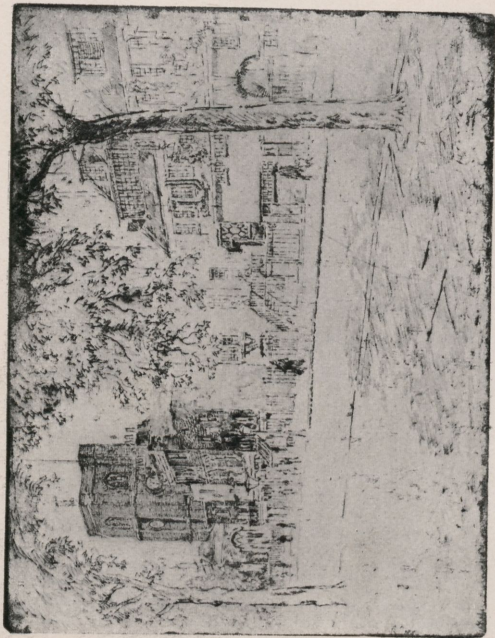
Three centuries ago Rembrandt was forced to become his own printer (and he would never suffer anyone to witness the printing). Whistler, also, through his extreme fastidiousness, became his own printer; and the great tradition is carried on by Mr. Pennell. Some etchers — and good ones — must remain at the mercy of the professional printer, because they themselves can never acquire the handicraft skill to print their own plates. The printer's proofs may be excellent, but they never can equal in originality the proof printed by the original artist, provided that he *knows how* to print.

No modern paper yields so good a proof as does fine hand-made paper, which has been mellowed in tone and texture by one or two centuries of age, and Mr. Pennell (who is a great traveller throughout Europe) has been most fortunate in accumulating a supply of the finest old paper. A glance at the proofs now exhibited will demonstrate the important part which the paper plays in the total result.

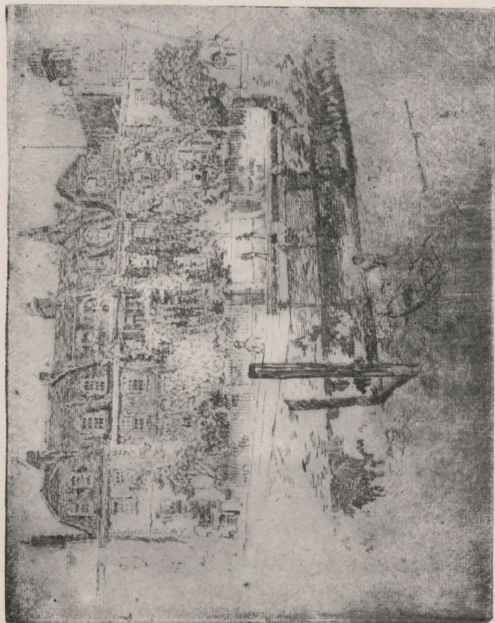
To pass from the printing to the more important subject of the result of the printing, namely, the pictures themselves, it will be seen that inexhaustible London furnishes the subjects of most of the etchings. No sensitive person can live in London for long years without acquiring a real love for the greatest of all cities. Even its very uglinesses have their charm !

Of Mr. Pennell's latest London etchings there are distinct groups. The Lincoln's Inn series shows the characteristic aspect of buildings in the region consecrated to law and lawyers. The Chelsea plates have their personal and distinctive character, and so have the etchings of scenes on the Thames. Of single etchings some of the most notable are "St. Paul's Cathedral, seen from Ludgate Hill," "Westminster Abbey, the West Front," "Lindsay Row," "Tower Bridge" and the "Dock Head" on the Thames. Besides these there is a fine plate representing Greenwich and another of the old palace of Hampton Court.

"To have seen Mr. Pennell at work etching a plate" — (to quote from the writer's article in the *Outlook* of September 23d last) — "is a thing to remember. He loves to depict the towering buildings of crowded city streets. Most



The House Where Whistler Died—No. 74 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea



Lindsay Row

etchers of such subjects would make a sketch on the spot and afterward toil laboriously over the copper plate in the retirement of their studios ; but Mr. Pennell takes a far more direct course, and one which would disconcert almost any other artist. He chooses his place in the crowded street, and stands there quite undisturbed by the rush of passers-by or by the idlers who stand and stare at him or at his work. Taking quick glances at the scene he is depicting, he rapidly draws his lines with the etching-needle upon the copper plate which he holds in his other hand, and, what to me seems an astonishing *tour de force*, he never hesitates one instant in selecting the exact spot on his plate where he is about to draw some vital line of the picture, each line of it being a ‘learnèd stroke’ such as Sir Seymour Haden insists upon.

In conclusion, we call special attention to the quality of the proofs exhibited. Some of these are printed in a quiet golden brown tone which is most characteristic of London. In both etching and printing Mr. Pennell seems to be fulfilling the Bible prophecy — “they shall go from strength to strength,” for his latest etchings are pretty sure to be accounted his best.

New Etchings of London by Joseph Pennell.

The following etchings of London, by Mr. Pennell, can be supplied, at present, by Messrs. Frederick Keppel & Co., No. 4 East 39th Street, New York.

Greenwich Park—Number One

At Richmond

The Thames, from Richmond Hill

On Clapham Common

The Pond—Clapham Common

Rossetti's House

Lindsay Row

The House Where Whistler Died

Great College Street

Lincoln's Inn Fields

The Great Gate—Lincoln's Inn

The Hall—Lincoln's Inn

The Hall Door—Lincoln's Inn

The Old Court—Lincoln's Inn

Park Lane

Limehouse

Thames Wharf



Classic London—Saint-Martin's-in-the-Fields



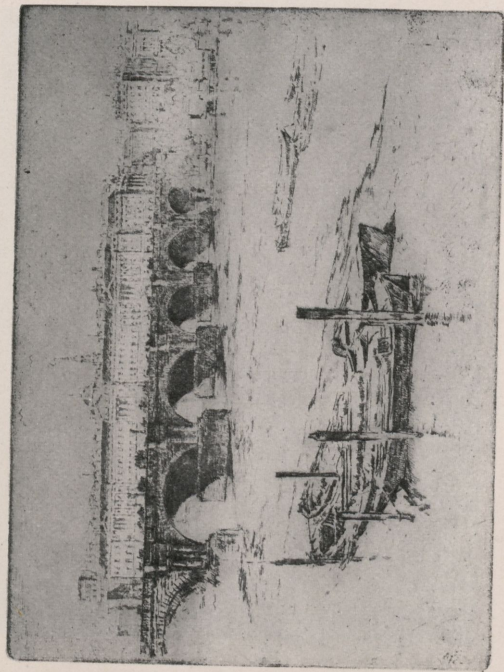
The Clock Tower, from the Surrey Side



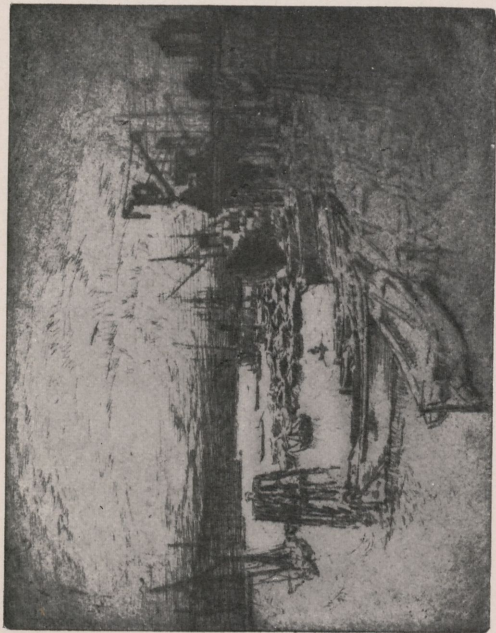
At Richmond

The Dock Head
The Tower Bridge
From Tower Bridge
The Great Cranes—South Kensington
St. Clement Dane's
St. Dunstan's—Fleet Street
No. 230 Strand
The Institute—Piccadilly
St. Bartholomew's Gate
The Crystal Palace
Whitehall Court
Up to St. Paul's
St. Paul's
St. Paul's—the West Door
The Gothic Cross
Cheyne Walk—Chelsea
The Big Tree—Cheyne Walk
St. James' Park
Classic London—St. Martin's-in-the-Fields
The Foreign Office
Albert Hall
The Haymarket Theatre
Ludgate Hill, showing the Holborn Viaduct
Bridge Street—Westminster
Magnificent Kensington
London Bridge Stairs—from the Surrey Side
Trafalgar Square

The Coliseum—from Trafalgar Square
King's College—the Embankment Gate
Cumberland Terrace—Regent's Park
Cumberland Gate
The British Museum
Waterloo Bridge and Somerset House
Steps of the British Museum
Leadenhall Market
Westminster Abbey—West Front
Entrance to Henry VII's Chapel—Westminster
Abbey
The Admiralty
The Clock Tower, from the Surrey Side
Waterloo Towers
Hampton Court Palace



Waterloo Bridge and Somerset House



The Dock Head

